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**U.S. Announces Regional Seminar on the FTAA
Unique Opportunity for Public Participation**

WASHINGTON- The United States, Mexico and Canada, the three North American countries negotiating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) are inviting the public to attend a regional seminar on the FTAA in Merida, Mexico, on July 18, 2002.

The seminar will provide the public with an opportunity to hear governmental and non-governmental officials discuss various aspects of the FTAA negotiation. The topics covered will include market access, agriculture, services, investment, transparency and civil society participation in the FTAA process, as well as the benefits of trade liberalization. The seminar is one of several regional seminars that will be held in the hemisphere providing opportunities for the public to discuss the FTAA.

“The FTAA is a top priority for the United States - it will create the largest free trade zone in history, spanning the 34 democracies of the Western Hemisphere,” said U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick. “Ongoing public participation in the FTAA process is critical - this seminar is a unique opportunity for exchanging views on the whole range of FTAA issues.”

Prospective participants must register to attend the seminar via the seminar’s registration site at <http://www.economia-snci.gob.mx/oc/eventos/html/invitaen.asp> where further information on the event is available.

Additional information on the FTAA process and on the efforts of the FTAA Government Committee on the Participation of Civil Society to increase transparency and awareness of the FTAA can be found on the USTR website <http://www.ustr.gov/regions/whemisphere/ftaa.shtml> and the official FTAA website (<http://www.ftaa-alca.org>). The public also is invited to submit written contributions on the FTAA. Information on how to make submissions may be found at <http://www.ftaa-alca.org/spcomm/derdoc/dcs9e.doc>.

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